

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

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北京

# BEIJING TODAY

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## Long Reach of China's Huangniu

Health and mobility are in the hands of China's scalper gangs. **Page 4**



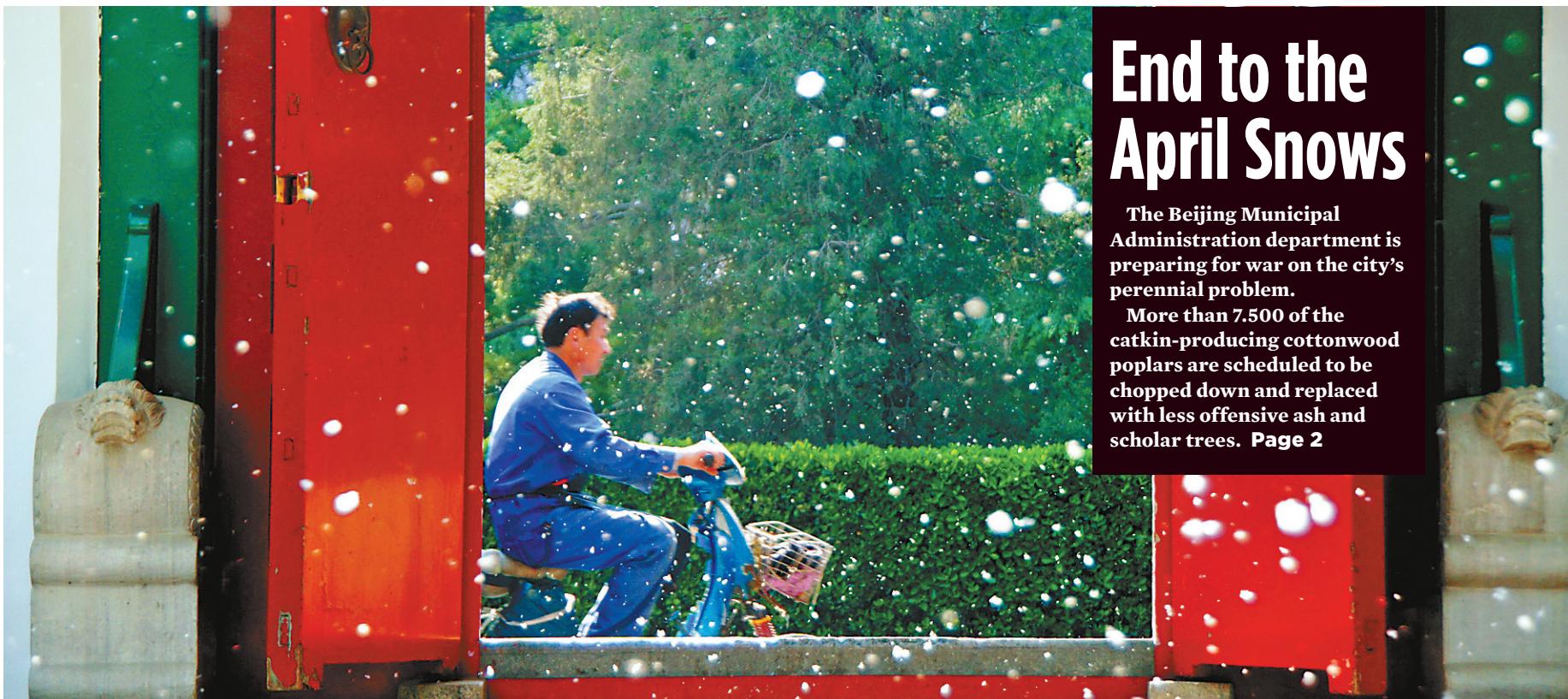
## 2015 the Year of the 'IP Film'

Easy box office wins have turned producers off to new content. **Page 5**



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Validation may be a front behind which corrupt educators profit. **Page 6**



## End to the April Snows

The Beijing Municipal Administration department is preparing for war on the city's perennial problem.

More than 7,500 of the catkin-producing cottonwood poplars are scheduled to be chopped down and replaced with less offensive ash and scholar trees. **Page 2**

## Subway Rules Tough on Beggars

BY DIAO DIAO

**N**ew rail regulations that took effect on May 1 are making work risky for the subway's notorious beggars, buskers and ad distributors.

Created to ensure safe railway operation, the regulations call for a maximum fine of 10,000 yuan for anyone caught distributing advertisements.

Liang Jianwei, a spokesman for the newly created police unit charged with enforcing the rules, said Beijing is deploying 600 new officers to patrol its 318 subway stations.

While beggars and buskers will not face the same fines as advertisers, they will be photographed and added to a police index.

In some busy stations such as Yonghegong, many career beggars return shortly after being warned and evicted by the police. Wang Qingbin, an officer monitoring the station, said many of the beggars he throws off the line return in a matter of hours.

"We expect beggars will face more serious fines once the regulations are updated

with specific punishments," Wang said. Due in two months, the update will also specify punishments for people who jump the subway gates or disturb public order.

In addition to banning beggars, the regulation officially opens the subway to guide dog users. Chen Yan was the first blind passenger who was able to take her guide dog on the subway.

"Guide dogs have always been a problem. The subway has been refusing to let me board with my guide dog for the last four years," Chen said. ■

### CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

#### SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
4,112.21	▼ 117.05 (2.77%)	+27.19%

#### SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
14,114.73	▼ 21.44 (0.15%)	+28.68%

#### HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
27,289.97	▼ 350.99 (1.27%)	+16.29%

Accurate to market close on May 7, 2015





Photo by Netease

## City Rolls Out Permanent Cure for the 'April Snows'

BY YANG XIN

The 85-kilometer drive to Longqingxia Scenic Spot in Yanqing District is getting risky. The road is lined by 1,200 aging cottonwood poplars, and many are nearing the end of their lives.

The trees are not expected to survive the summer floods without damaging cars or injuring people, according to the Road Administration of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transportation.

The commission said it would be removing 7,500 poplar trees throughout the city. All are more than 40 years old.

"These trees are facing their final

years. We have to cut down the aging poplars before this year's flood season," said a spokesman for the Beijing Municipal Engineering Administration Department. Trees to be cut down are primarily located in the districts of Yanqing, Pinggu, Shunyi and Fangshan.

Beijing's shrinking water table is leaving many poplars without functioning root systems. The ecological and economic value of the weakened trees is in sharp decline. Replacement trees include 11,000 new ash trees, scholar trees and white poplars.

The program is also expected to alleviate the city's catkin problem,

which Chinese media has dubbed "the April snows."

A blizzard of the wind-borne catkins arrives in Beijing every spring. The cottony buds clog noses and throats and occasionally sicken people.

"If you're a Beijing resident who loves snow but didn't get enough last winter, take heart. All across the city, fluffy white stuff is floating through the skies, wafting over hutongs and soaring as high as the 22nd floor of at least one building," wrote Ma Dantong, a *Wall Street Journal* blogger.

Catkins are petal-less flower clusters that come from poplar and willow trees. In the 1960s, the city began planting millions of poplar and willow trees in a greening project. Unfortunately, when planting the trees no one paid attention to their sexes. As a result, both poplar and willow trees have far a 7-to-3 male-to-female ratio.

Out of the 120 million trees that were planted in the Beijing area during the 1960s and 1970s, some 70 percent are industrious female catkin producers.

"As of 2014, only 10 percent of Beijing's female trees have been replaced. That leaves another 2.7 million to go," Ma said. ■

## McDonald's Fries Supplier Fined for Record Sum

BY WANG YAN

The world-renowned fast food chain McDonald's is again finding itself under fire in China.

The fast food chain's French fries supplier was fined an unprecedented 3.9 million for water pollution last Wednesday, Xinhua reported.

The penalty will be paid by Beijing Simplot Food Processing, a joint venture between US agribusiness giant J.R. Simplot Company, McDonald's and the Beijing Agricultural, Industrial and Commerce General Company.

Xinhua reported that city inspectors found the company was exceeding permit-



CFP Photos

ted levels of chemical oxygen discharge into water, releasing some 563mg per liter. The maximum tolerated discharge is 500mg per liter. Contaminated water found its way into the city water supply system, according to the Fengtai District Environmental Protection Bureau.

The fine was confirmed after a hearing in March. The decision was intended to send a message about the government's commitment to stronger environmental protection and concerns over sanitation as Beijing population continues to swell, a spokesperson for the bureau said. ■

(Wang Yan is an intern at Beijing Today.)

## Teen Who Killed Her Baby Returns to School

BY WANG LINGXIAO

After giving birth to a baby in the bathroom, 17-year-old mother Xiaomei (pseudonym) twice attempted to flush the boy down the toilet. When that failed, she removed him and threw him into the wastebasket.

Investigators said the boy died from the impact.

The unnamed boy was the result of a sexual relationship that Xiaomei began with a middle school classmate in Guizhou province in July 2011. In the second year of their romance, Xiaomei came to Beijing to study at a tourism school: that's when she learned she was pregnant.

"It's a tragedy that an immature mother would kill her own baby this way," said Pang Chunzi, a procurator at the first branch of Beijing Municipal People's Procuratorate, in an interview with the *Beijing Evening News*.

The first branch of Beijing Municipal People's Procuratorate prosecuted Xiaomei in June 2013. She was sentenced to three years imprisonment suspended for three years.

She has recently returned to school. Her mother has taken a job as a school janitor to accompany her.

Xiaomei's story is not unique. Pang said eight young mothers between the ages of 16 and 20 have killed their infants in Beijing since 2011.

Chinese law considers babies to be independent after their first breath, and Pang said many of the young mothers he prosecuted were unaware that babies are considered people and have rights.

"They were all from other cities and were working or studying in Beijing. They entered society too early and had little life experience," Pang said.

"Behind each of these tragedies is a lack of education in sex, family matters and the law." ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



# Global Scientists Shoot Down China's Gene Editing Efforts

BY YANG XIN

**A**n "epic" debate within the scientific community has brought one genetic scientific team at Sun Yat-sen University (SYSU) to the forefront of a major public dispute: should anyone even be researching technology that could modify human embryos?

The team at Sun Yat-Sen University published a scientific paper alleging that they had used gene-editing technology to modify human embryos obtained from an in vitro fertilization clinic. Their purpose was to see whether they could correct the gene defect that causes beta-thalassemia, a blood disease, by editing the DNA of fertilized eggs.

The paper showed that the current method remains highly inaccurate. Among the 86 embryos samples, only 28 survived gene modification. The team concluded that it was still too soon to use technology to edit embryos in a clinical setting.

It's not the scientific result that aroused public controversy; it's the research itself.

Before its publication in the low-profile domestic scientific journal called *Protein & Cell* on April 18, their team's report had been refused by the international

scientific journals *Nature* and *Science*. Nevertheless, it still circulated among researchers worldwide and provoked concern by highlighting how close medical science may be to tinkering with the human gene pool.

"These authors did a very good job pointing out the challenges," says Dieter Egli, a researcher at the New York Stem Cell Foundation in Manhattan. "They say themselves this type of technology is not ready for any kind of application."

But some scientists think the human gene pool is sacrosanct and should never be the subject of technological alteration, even for medical reasons. Others tend to be more neutral, saying that germ-line engineering might one day be useful but needs much more testing.

*Nature* laid out many of its objections in a recent commentary. To begin with, mistakes might occur in the editing process that could result in severe birth defects, and successful edits could affect other parts of the genome that were meant to be left alone. Furthermore, it's impossible to get consent from future generations who might inherit an altered gene.

Writers of the journal worried that problems with embryo editing could

derail work on gene therapy in general and called on scientists to cease all experiments that would affect multiple generations until discussions about safety and ethics were complete.

Those concerns were echoed a few weeks later in an essay in *Science* that said embryonic gene editing experiments should be off-limits in clinical settings.

Huang Junjiu, associate professor of the School of Life Science at SYSU and leader of the research team said that he stopped the research after the poor results. "If you want to do it in normal embryos, you need to be close to 100 percent," he told *Nature*. "That's why we stopped. We still think it's too immature."

"The controversy is nothing more than normal academic argument. We have no plan to give a response on this," Cai Shanshan, a spokesman for the school, told *The Paper*.

"Undoubtedly, the research is in accordance with Chinese moral and ethical norms. The objection of the foreign scientific community is merely a result of conceptual differences," said a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences who refused to be named. ■



Photo by The Higher Learning

# Death Sentence Upheld for Serial Killer, Rapist

BY WANG YAN

**T**he highest court of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region upheld a death sentence verdict for the infamous serial killer and rapist Zhao Zhihong last Wednesday.

Zhao was sentenced to death in February after being convicted of 13 rapes and 10 murders between 1996 and 2005. Most of his victims were located in the Inner Mongolian cities of Hohhot and Ulanqab.

Zhao has been at the forefront of a national



Photo by Xinhua

controversy since 2005, when he was arrested and confessed to most of his crimes. Among them was a 1996 rape and murder in Hohhot for which the 18-year-old Huugjilt was convicted and executed.

In April 1996, Huugjilt called local police to report that he had discovered a body at a textile factory. Police arrested Huugjilt and interrogated him for two days until he agreed to confess to the killing. He was sentenced to death in a hastily convened trial and executed that June. His case was reopened in February when the Hohhot Intermediate People's

Court formally charged Zhao with robbery, 10 murders and the rapes of 12 women and one 12-year-old girl. Zhao was also convicted of using violence to steal 31,400 yuan in goods and burgling another 3,500 yuan of property.

Zhao lodged an appeal, calling on the court to show leniency since he confessed the crime for which Huugjilt was executed. The court rejected his plea, citing Zhao's "despicable motives, cruel measures and the serious consequences of his crimes."

Huugjilt was exonerated 18 years after his execution in December 2014. Xinhua reported that the government paid 2.05 million yuan to his surviving family members as compensation for their son's wrongful death, 60 days of detention and funeral costs.

The case marks the highest-profile reversal of a Chinese court decision in recent years. Last October, the government announced it would begin a reform of the country's judicial system in response.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate published a statement on its official website in February, stating that procuratorates across the country must form an accountability system to prevent more wrongful convictions. ■

(Wang Yan is an intern at Beijing Today.)

## THE WEEK IN WEIRD

STRANGE HAPPENINGS ON THE CHINESE NEWS WIRE  
BY SU DERUI

### Jiangsu Man Jailed for Selling Fake Xiaomis

A man surnamed Yang from Yangzhou, Jiangsu province was found guilty of selling counterfeit trademarked goods by Yangzhou's Guangling District Court last week.

The court sentenced Yang to three years in jail and fined him 900,000 yuan for selling 750 counterfeit Xiaomi phones on his Taobao shop.

The sales took place between January and May 2014. At the time of his arrest, Yang was found with 179 fake Xiaomi phones in his possession.

In addition to the sentence, the court ordered Yang to repay the 490,000 yuan he made in illegal income.

(The Paper)

### Driving Teacher Caught Sexually Harassing Student

A driving instructor in Mianyang, Sichuan province was caught sexually harassing one of his students.

The instructor repeatedly suggested that the woman, Xiao Li (pseudonym), should sleep with him. He also sent her messages over WeChat to profess his attraction.

Xiao Li reported the instructor to the authorities after he began threatening her.

(Tencent News)

### Airplane Passenger Fined for Inflating Life Jacket

A female passenger on an April 22 flight from Changsha to Wenzhou shocked flight attendants by removing the life jacket from under her seat and beginning to inflate it.

When crew attempted to stop the woman she began cursing at them.

The passenger was arrested by airport police in Wenzhou International airport and fined 200 yuan.

(Tencent News)

### Dongguan Deploys Costliest School Uniforms

Dongguan Foreign Language School is requiring its students to fork over 2,180 yuan for a set of 12 new school uniforms with a total of 18 pieces.

A teacher from the school confirmed that the price was correct, but noted that it was set by the Bureau of Education – not the school. Furthermore, the price will be the new standard in all public middle schools starting from this year.

Private middle schools in Dongguan, by contrast, charge only 900 yuan for their 14-piece uniform sets.

(Tencent News)

### Beijing Aunties Work Shoe Shiner to Exhaustion

A Beijing movie theater ran a promotional event that allowed moviegoers to receive a complementary shoeshine from a male model on April 28.

As those familiar with China might expect, an army of damsels showed up with bags of shoes and worked the shiner until he passed out from heat stroke.

(Tencent News)



# Health and Mobility in the Hands of the Huangniu

BY DIAO DIAO

A gang of 25 people was arrested at Nanjing Railway Station for threatening passengers and selling overpriced tickets on April 29. Police identified the leaders as a 61-year-old woman surnamed Ni and her 43-year-old nephew surnamed Yuan.

The ticket crew operated out of 16 vehicles near the railway station, where they pressured passengers to purchase their bus and subway tickets and drove them to the appropriate station.

Once getting passengers into their cars, they demanded special fees for service, seat registration and other payments.

The arrests mark one of China's largest huangniu busts in recent years.

Huangniu, also known as piaofanzi in Beijing dialect, bear many similarities to ticket scalpers found abroad. But where ticket scalpers limit their trade to public events, huangniu are ubiquitous.

The phenomenon has its origins in Shanghai some 200 years ago, when hoarding gangs would buy out all the city's goods and supplies and resell them at higher rates.

During the early Republican Era, huangniu controlled China's gold market. During the Cultural Revolution, they controlled the distribution of sewing machines, bicycles, televisions and food tickets.

Today, huangniu have their hands in almost every Chinese industry.

## The Yellow Cows

The *Beijing News* reported that all train tickets connecting Beijing to other cities were sold out even before the May Day holiday began. Yet many travel agencies said they had tickets



CFP Photos

reserved through the National Railway Administration for passengers who were willing to pay a premium.

China's Customer Protection Law bans the National Railway Administration from reserving tickets for travel agencies.

An investigation by *Beijing News* revealed that such travel agencies bought their tickets on 12306.com, the official train ticketing website, and resold them at a higher price.

It's odd that this remains possible. In 2012, national regulations tied train tickets to identity cards and limited each ID to purchasing no more than three tickets.

But where there is money to be made, huangniu will find a way.

On Tiantan, a popular Web forum, users shared their stories of buying tickets from huangniu during the Spring Festival rush.

Qianxia, an IT worker in Bei-

jing, said she bought train tickets from a huangniu in 2011 to return home to Shandong province during the festival.

"I knew the tickets would sell out fast, so I waited in front of my computer and kept refreshing the page to get into the booking system. By the time it loaded I was too late," she said.

Her only option was to find a huangniu – even as she fretted over the legality.

"The process was complicated. They contacted me saying that they have tickets, and that they were valid and legal because they bought them using a family member's ID card," Qianxia said. "They told me to go online and buy my ticket as soon as they returned one. I ended up paying a lot more."

Qianxia's ticket from Beijing to Shandong cost 260 yuan, a 75-yuan

markup. Others spent even more.

Even Beijing's subway tickets – which have never been limited in quantity – are traded by the huangniu.

The Beijing subway has more than 5 million passengers per day. But out-of-towners are often unfamiliar with the city's automatic ticketing machines and prefer to wait in line and buy their tickets at the window.

Huangniu working near the railway stations often buy 4-yuan tickets and sell them to passengers who want to avoid the queue. But the tickets are often too cheap to get visitors where they are going – most have to purchase a second ticket to exit the subway.

Chinese entertainment is dominated by the huangniu as well.

Tickets to the World Table Tennis Championships' opening ceremony on April 25 sold out long before the games began. But almost 40 percent of the seats remained vacant, according to reporters for the *Beijing Youth Daily*.

The missing seats were in the hands of huangniu, who occupied the stadium entrance to sell seats priced anywhere from 50 yuan to more than 200 yuan.

International Table Tennis Federation and organization committee said tickets went on sale in early January. There were no identification requirements or limits on the number of tickets people could buy.

More despicably, the huangniu also control China's hospitals.

Seeing a doctor at a hospital requires purchasing a number. Patients must buy a number for a doctor in a relevant department, and doctors are priced according to their experience. Most will only see 30 patients per day.

Huangniu often arrive at the hospitals early in the morning and buy out all the numbers for the most experienced doctors. Incoming patients are left with no choice other than to buy a number from a huangniu.

## Stricter Laws Needed

In many ways, the huangniu phenomenon is similar to the people who buy apartments and sell them to earn money.

While the huangniu's profit margins may pale in comparison to those of real estate speculators, their work has a profound influence on society.

Many netizens are calling for stricter laws to standardize the ticketing market. The train ticketing website 12306.com is especially in need of reform to protect travelers' rights.

There have also been calls for transparency. Few know what huangniu do with their leftover tickets, but many suspect it too is involved in corruption.

China's large population may be the greatest barrier to effective reform.

Although train tickets must be printed with the passenger's real name and identification number, many conductors do not check the information – especially during the holiday rush, when trains are at their fullest.

*Northnews.cn* said in an editorial that while it's true the government needs stronger laws, the huangniu only remain in business because citizens are willing to ignore existing laws and buy from illegal sellers. ■



# Adaptations Lead the Chinese Film Industry



BY WANG LINGXIAO

Intellectual property is the film industry's latest buzzword. The movie *Silent Separation* was first adapted from a novel into a TV series and then a movie, which aired during the May Day holiday.

The show comes hot on the heels of film adaptations of *The Left Ear* and *Ever Since We Loved*. Aside from sharing some of the top young film stars, the movies share the same trait of adapting popular young adult fiction.

Chinese film industry writers have coined the term "IP movie" to describe the trend.

Intellectual property includes copyrights, patents and trademarks and is not a new concept for Chinese filmmakers. The country's first film, *Dingjun Hill*, as well as the internationally acclaimed *Farewell My Concubine* and *Red Sorghum*, were also adapted from books.

But since 2013, the majority of films have all been adapted from existing intellectual property. Among the top draws were *Where Are We Going Dad*, a film based on a popular variety show, and *My Old Classmate*, based on a song of the same name.

Many filmmakers are following the trend and scrambling to snap up more property.

## Competition for Rights

Aside from the oddball variety show or song, the most popular properties for film and TV adaptation are novels. Many Internet novels option their film rates for 2 million to 5 million yuan. Rights to the most popular novels can cost as much as 10 million yuan.

Public data shows the cost of intellectual property rights to books published on Clouddary, an online literature platform, has increased 10 times during the last year.

By the end of 2014, there were 114 Internet novels licensed for film and TV adaptation and 24 slated for film alone, the *Economic Observer* reported.

Novels – especially Internet novels – are considered preferable to original screenplays because they have an existing fan base. Adaptations offer an easy way for film producers to tap into that fan base. Even non-readers are drawn to the productions by their knowledge of the fan base.

*Silent Separation*, for example, was serialized on Jinjiang Original Net for more than 10 years. Its large fan base offered guaranteed consumers for the film.

"When you consider it, the producers are buying the fan base rather than the stories. The size of a novel's cult following determines its value to a producer," said Ran Jia'nan, screenwriter of the film *Painted Skin*.

Screenwriting is the biggest risk a film producer can face. Adapting an existing novel to a screenplay usually takes three months, but developing an original story can take much longer.

## Short on Imagination

A dearth of originality could be to blame for the adaptation trend.

But it's not all doom and gloom: the film boom is also leading some producers to gamble on bringing original content to the screen.

"A few years ago I attended a seminar for screenwriters. Only one actually talked about developing a quality screenplay – the other 20 just wanted to explore crafty ways to insert product placements. It seems like there simply aren't enough people in the industry who want to be creative," said Shu Huan, the screenwriter of *Lost in Thailand*.

What's more, not all producers can profit on IP movies. While *Where Are We Going Dad* and *Running Man*

won huge profits, film adaptations of *Voice of China* and *Happy Boys* were miserable failures.

"Licensing intellectual property can be an opportunity, but it can also be a trap. Although some novels are popular, they really don't fit the screen," Shu said.

## Finding a Direction

Adaptations are also popular abroad: nearly two-thirds of Hollywood's productions are adapted from novels or comics. The most popular in recent years include *The Twilight Saga* and *The Hunger Games*. Some have turned into long-running series, such as *The Fast and the Furious*, which is on its seventh film, and *007*, which now includes 24 films.

But where Hollywood's adaptations show off a superior quality, Chinese films still have a long way to go.

At the Beijing International Film Festival, American screenwriter William Rabkin said purchasing property rights is just the first step. *Toy Story 3* brought in \$1.1 billion at the box office, but the related games, books and media sales brought in \$8.7 billion.

But that long-term earning power depends on the movie's success. A good story should be the core of any movies.

"Stories should be meaningful and attractive. They need to capture the spirit of their time. It's hard for a movie to succeed if the producer is only focusing on the popularity of its source material rather the story itself," said Zhao Hui, the marketing director of the film *Where Are We Going Dad*. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Photo by CFP

# Educators Profit on the Hassle of Diploma Validation

BY YANG XIN

Certificates might be the most frustrating fact of life in China. Every interaction with schools, banks, employers and police requires the applicant to present a pile of documents and letters confirming the authenticity.

But few are as mired in murky corruption as those which authenticate diplomas.

Lin Xing (pseudonym), a teacher at Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, is currently confronting the authentication system. In order to apply for the title of lecturer, he must submit his Ph. D diploma to the school and a letter certifying its authenticity.

At the Guangdong Provincial Diploma Authentication Center, a single diploma authentication takes 15 working days and costs anywhere from 95 yuan to 280 yuan.

But in spite of being required, the service has long been unnecessary.

## Unpleasant Service

That employers often ask for diplomas to be authenticated is no surprise.

A lack of higher education kept early inland migrants to the Pearl River Delta from advancing in their careers. Many responded by forming companies to print fake degrees.

The ensuing flood of false credentials forced employers to require diploma authentication for applicants. But the expensive process has come to be reviled.

An announcement by National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) in 2011 defined diploma authentication as a legitimate paid service. It's reasoning sounds fair: authentication centers need money to build and maintain the database used to verify applicants' diplomas.

"Individuals voluntarily elect to have their diplomas authenticated. Therefore, no fiscal appropriation is offered to the service provider. We need to take over-

all cost, including database maintenance, software updates and equipment procurements into consideration when setting a price for the service," a spokesperson for the NDRC's Department of Price Supervision said.

But the development of information technology is making such excuses a tough sell.

The Ministry of Education created its own online diploma authentication service, the China Higher Education Student Information and Career Center (CHESICC), in 2001. Digital verification has been available for all higher education diplomas issued since the turn of the millennium.

While authorized diploma verification centers charge 95 yuan or more, the online verification costs a mere 2 yuan and can be paid for with a text message.

Many fresh graduates wonder why employers require diploma authentication when they can easily be verified on the

CHESICC website.

According to a report in *Science News* in 2012, employers, no matter whether they make a single inquiry or a batch inquiry, must cause certain expenses.

## Obscure Charging Body

On April 10, *South Weekly* formally requested that the NDRC and the National Higher Education Student Information and Career Guidance Center publish a breakdown of how their authentication fees are calculated and data on their yearly revenue.

The center declined, stating that the requested information would reveal trade secrets.

The move drew even more suspicion to the administrative body.

"We can say it's a public institution, since it's authorized by the Ministry of Education and issues documents to national educational departments and schools. Yet it claims its balance sheet contains trade secrets. How can a public institution have trade secrets?" said Ma Xiangbin, a commentator.

"As an administrative body, they can hardly claim trade secrets. It's not a great leap to say that those 'trade secrets' are evidence that diploma authentication centers are being used to line the pockets of national power-holding authorities," Ma said.

China has 36 diploma authentication centers authorized by the CHESICC.

If each received 20 authentication requests per day, the CHESICC would earn 68,400 yuan in revenue per day. That's a considerable amount of money heading into the pockets of education authorities each year.

## Rent-Seeking

Diploma authentication is required for anyone who hopes to study abroad, find a job, move their hukou or acquire a new professional title or promotion.

Other than authorized authentication centers, a series of unregistered authentication agents have to provide urgent services to those in need. Their motto is simple: "We know someone up above."

"Like the booming false credential market, the diploma authentication has become a lucrative market monopolized by the authorities," said Tang Yinghong, a psychologist.

"From the perspective of social psychology, diploma authentication is controlled by education authorities. The common people play the role of the victim because they have no choice but to pay to have their paperwork processed."

"In a normal, functioning society, a public institution would have to bear social responsibility along with its public power," Tang said. "In this way, false credentials are the result of the authorities' misconduct in shouldering their responsibilities. Their passion for diploma authentication shows that false credentials are tolerated as a way to make money off diploma verification."

"Administrative services, no matter if they are free or not, should be not-for-profit. The database comes from relevant government departments, so there is no reason to charge individuals for its maintenance," Ma Xiangbin said.

Ma called on educators to break up the country's diploma authentication services and let the market regulate service providers. ■



Everlasting Regret

Photo by 9 Theater

# Western and Eastern Female Roles Highlighted in Stage Art



Hors-Champ

Photo by critiphodance.e-monster.com

BY YANG XIN

**T**hree works by Michèle Noiret, David Drouard and Guo Tingbo are coming to Beijing this month to give locals a window into contemporary dance and theatre.

Noiret, a Belgian dancer and choreographer, is presenting her work in China for the first time at the Poly Theatre on May 13 and 14. Her multimedia show *Hors-Champ* features fascinating stage sound and visual design, as well as a mysterious and breathtaking story.

In the play, a couple is invited to dinner at a grand villa in an affluent neighborhood. After settling into the living room, the guests talk with each other over a dinner that never takes place. An air of mystery, anguish and violence sets in, and brutal images lead viewers to the heart of a drama that hovers between reality and nightmare.

Drouard, a French choreographer and dancer, will perform *Faune*

on May 19 and 20 at Nine Theater.

In the ancient myth, Faune is a half god-half monster. He is also the symbol of creativity, music, poetry and sex, as well as horror and nightmare. Drouard's choreography is a solo dance with a giant bear, a disjointed puppet that derives its animalistic force from the dancer's steps.

By taking the audience back to the origins of modern civilization, the choreographer ponders whether the era of cultural industry and hyper-consumerism is costing humanity its nature.

Guo, a Chinese film, TV and theatre director as well as screenwriter and playwright, will perform *Everlasting Regret* on May 19 and 20 at Nine Theater.

During the Tang Dynasty, the rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Siming led to the death of imperial consort Yang Guifei. The love and hatred between Yang and two men – Emperor Xuanzong and An – has

been interpreted through the ages. She falsely believed that her true love would emerge through a war of power between the men. Her death was the only time she became the master of her own fate.

The show uses physical theatre to re-interpret the history and present an old Chinese tale in a modern fashion.

The shows are organized by the French Embassy in China, the Belgian Wallonie-Bruxelles Delegation in Beijing, the International Women's Festival, Croisements Festival and the Beijing Women International Communication Center.

Aside from stage shows, the French Embassy is also bringing the three choreographers and directors to the French Institute on May 10 to discuss their process of creation, women, dance and theatre.

Tickets to the performances are available at [www.228.com.cn/s/国际女性戏剧节/](http://www.228.com.cn/s/国际女性戏剧节/). ■



Faune

Photo by douban.com

## Cervantes Institute to Pull Don Quixote's Strings

BY YANG XIN



Photo by Cervantes Institute in Beijing

To celebrate the bicentenary of the second edition of Miguel de Cervantes' literary masterpiece, Cervantes Institute and Meet in Beijing Arts Festival 2015 is presenting a Don Quixote puppet show.

Cervantes is considered one of the greatest figures in Spanish and world literature. His most famous novel, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, was published in two parts in Madrid in 1605 and 1615. The novel was an immediate success, and its first part sold through six editions in the first year of its publication.

The novel is set in sixteenth century Spain, when a nameless and aged hidalgo has gone mad from reading too many chivalric romances. Proclaiming himself "Don Quixote", he sets out with his obedient squire, the farmer Sancho Panza, to

revive chivalry and reform the world. His noble ladylove is a woman of loose morals named Dulcinea.

The lighthearted comedy presents an alternate reality that unfolds into a hy-

terical tale of enchantment and madness. Don Quixote mistakes inns for castles, flocks of sheep for armies, wine casks for monsters and windmills for giants. Fantasy and reality collide as mundane objects take center stage in the tale of a man whose search for nobility leads, instead, to himself.

Although written as a satirical romance, it contained fiction's first "fun" characters, Don Quixote and his old horse Rosinante, whose bumbling exploits were not only read and re-read by a delighted public but inspired innumerable imitations.

Spectators and theatre critics from all over the world experienced the fascination of Quixote on stage through Bambalina's puppetry masterpiece.

With two clerics dressed in black, a

table, precise gestures and harmonized music, Bambalina recreates how Quixote alone, in a room in his house, obsessively reads all types of books until he is driven mad. The mute and yet eloquent Don Quixote goes on all sorts of adventures with Sancho and Dulcinea.

Using gothic and expressionist evocations, Bambalina recreates popular episodes such as Don Quixote's adventure to the windmills and the scene from the Master Peter Puppet Show.

Through an evocative scenography, the audience can see how Quixote mixes reality and fiction until he is finally humiliated by those around him and defeated by his own demons.

The show will be held at the Beijing at Cervantes Institute on May 14 at 7 pm and at Rose Bud in 798 District on May 16 at 3 pm. ■



Internship programs include the Beijing Today Media Center Internship Program and Teen Reporters' Training Project.

Featured programs include Counter Strike themed paintball, National Defense Practice and Agricultural Experiences like tree planting, fishing, fruit picking and leisure and sightseeing.

In addition, BYCI has many themed rooms such as an On-site News Studio, a Leatherwork and Knitting Room, Paper Modeling Room, Facial Mask Making Room and others.

BYCI's ambitions are not limited to providing youth with an interactive education and training platform: it has the loftier aspiration of enhancing long-term communication, mutual understanding and friendship between young people in China and around the world.

The camp began its operations in February 2013 and has expanded to include six campgrounds in the districts of Chaoyang, Shunyi, Daxing and Fangshan.

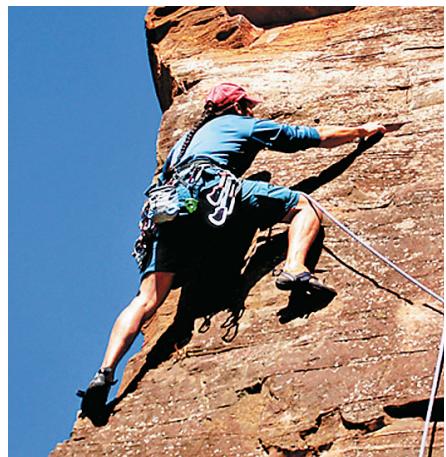
BYCI is supported by the Beijing Municipal Government, the Communist Youth League Beijing Committee (CYLB) and the Beijing Youth Daily Group (BYDG).

Though BYCI has only been around for two years it has already won international praise.

Marjan Gabriel, attaché to the EU Delegation, praised BYCI on his visit: "I never thought there is such a place with beautiful views and a professional team just an hour and half's ride from the downtown." ■

(By Shu Pengqian)

## Beijing Youth Camp International the Capital's 'Disneyland'



**W**hile the Disney parks in Hong Kong and Shanghai remain the ultimate recreational destination for Chinese youth, Beijing Youth Camp International (BYCI) attempts to capture some of that magic.

BYCI provides youths from all over the world with the chance to learn about other cultures through diverse communication and cooperation activities.

For Chinese youth who are often trapped indoors, the park is an excellent opportunity to free themselves and experience new things; foreign visitors are able to learn about China's long history and rich culture by joining the camp.

BYCI's activities include culture and exchange programs, education and training programs, outdoor sports programs, internship programs and other featured programs.

Culture and exchange programs include the Overseas Summer/Winter Camp, Beijing International Twins Festival and Youth Reading Salon.

Education and training programs include such activities as English Journalism Training, Media Public Relations Management and Professional Training of Young Teachers.

Outdoor sports programs are subdivided into climbing, speed downhill, skating, hiking, camping and bicycling.

# BEIJING TODAY

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